

Mulbarton (Community) Infant School Statutory Proposal to change the Age Range

1. LA details

Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 2DL

2. School details

Mulbarton Infant School
The Common
Mulbarton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR14 8JG

3. Description of alteration and evidence of demand

Since September 2013, Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior School have been in a successful partnership. The governing bodies of both schools now wish to legally combine into one single school.

This proposal is to extend the infant school's age range from 4 - 7 to 4 -11 and to enlarge the physical capacity of the school (through amalgamation with the co-located junior school site), from 145 places to 420 places. The admission number will remain at 60 creating a 2 form entry all-through primary school.

This proposal is related to one to close Mulbarton Junior School in order to move from an infant/junior model of primary education to an all-through single tier primary model.

The Governors of Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior Schools with the support of Norfolk County Council conducted an initial consultation on this proposal from 4 October 2016 to 22 November 2016, which demonstrated that the principle of all-through primary education was seen as positive. Respondents clearly saw the advantages for the continuity of their children's learning, and appreciated the idea of having to build a relationship with a single school throughout the primary years. They were also attracted by the practical advantages of having to take their primary age children to one part of the site.

4. Objectives and reasons

These proposals are part of a set of proposals which have two main objectives:

- To ensure a sufficient supply of school places in response to housing growth and other demographic changes.
- To create a system which is sustainable in the long term and is consistent with the County Council's view that all-through primary education is in the best interests of the children.

There are many strong educational reasons for this preference:

- Stronger relationships are established with parents through consistent communication and reporting.
- Children can benefit from a wider range of teacher expertise across key stages and a broader curriculum, and have greater continuity in their learning.
- It is easier to track children's progress and attainment in one school.
- It is less likely that there will be a dip in children's performance at school because they do not have to move from one school to another when they are seven.
- The curriculum can be planned coherently to support pupils' learning as they move through the school.
- Over seven years, staff get to know children and their families very well, and can plan coherently to support the needs of individual children as they move through the school.

In our experience, parents like the security of knowing that once their child has been admitted to Reception in a particular school, he/she is assured of that place until the time comes to move to the High School and parents who have a number of children in the primary phase would only have to build a relationship with one school.

5. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

This proposal for Mulbarton Infant School is related to a proposal to close Mulbarton Junior School. Other primary phase schools in the Hethersett cluster group (with the exception of Hethersett itself) are already all-through primaries, and are not in the scope of this review.

6. Project costs and an indication of how these will be met

There are no project costs associated to this proposal however, both schools have recently benefited from a NCC basic need project. This involved the demolition of four undersized classrooms dating from the 1970's, replacing them with a new extension of four new primary school classrooms and staffroom. The £1.66m project, funded by Norfolk County Council, also included improvements to the infant school entrance and new toilets for the Reception classroom. An old mobile block was removed as part of the scheme.

7. Implementation date and proposed stages

The proposal will be implemented on 1 September 2017.

8. Consultation

The proposal for Mulbarton Infant School formed part of an extensive consultation held between 4 October and 22 November 2016. During that consultation, two public meetings were held at the schools - on Tuesday 11 October and Thursday 13 October 2016. The consultation document is attached at Appendix A. Over 400 copies of the consultation document were distributed

and 80 responses were received. Of those, 87.5% (70 responses) agreed with the proposal and 12.5% (10 responses) disagreed.

9. Related proposals

This proposal is related to the proposal to close Mulbarton Junior School.

10. Procedure for making representations

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals by emailing us at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk, or by writing to us at:

Mulbarton Schools Consultation, FREEPOST, 1H 2076, Floor 8, Bay 29, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.